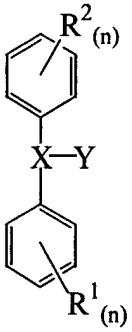
AMENDMENTS

In the Claims:

Please replace claims 28-39 with the following clean set of claims.

28. (Amended) An agent which protects stratified squamous epithelium against injury by a noxious substance, and has the formula:



wherein: X is a linker selected from the group consisting of C_1-C_6 alkylene, C_2-C_6 alkenylene, and C_3-C_6 alkynylene, wherein X may optionally include 1 or 2 oxygen atoms and/or 1 sulfur atom;

Y is a group pendant from X, wherein Y is C_1-C_{10} alkyl, C_2-C_{10} alkenyl, C_2-C_{10} alkynyl, aromatic or cyclic-aliphatic to which is attached at least one $-OSO_3R^4$ moiety, wherein R^4 is H or a pharmaceutically acceptable cation, and, optionally, at least one hydroxyl group; or,

Y is $-OSO_3R^4$, wherein R^4 is H or a pharmaceutically acceptable cation;

n is an integer from 1-3; and

R^1 and R^2 are each independently selected from the group consisting of -H, a halogen with an atomic number from 9 to 53, hydroxy, $-SO_3R^4$, $-OSO_3R^4$, -NCS, -NCO, $-NH(CO)-OR^3$, $-NH(CS)SR^3$, $-NH(C=NH)OR^3$, $-NHCOCH_2Cl$, $-NHCOCH_2Br$, $-NHCO-CH=CH_2$, $-NHC(O)-CF_3$, $-S-CH_2-CH=CH_2$, $-NHCH_2-C\equiv CH$, $-NH-CH_2-CN$, $-NH-S-CH_2-CH=CH_2$, $-O-CH_2-CH=CH_2$, $-NH-CF_3$, N-mono-, di-, tri-, tetra- and penta-haloethyl, -CN, $-NH_2$, $-NO_2$, $-NHCOCH_3$, -CHO, $-COOR^4$, $-N_3$, $-COR^3$, $-R^3OH$, $-R^3NHCOCH_3$, $-R^3OSO_3R^4$, $-R^3SO_3R^4$, $-OR^3$, $-SR^3$ and $-R^3$, wherein R^3 is p-nitrophenyl, C_1-C_6 alkyl, C_2-C_6 alkenyl, or C_2-C_6 alkynyl, if at the distal end of the substituent, or C_1-C_6 alkylene, C_2-C_6 alkenylene, or C_2-C_6 alkynylene, if at the proximal end of the substituent, and wherein R^4 is H or a pharmaceutically acceptable cation.

29. The agent of claim 28, wherein at least one of R_1 and R_2 is -NCS.

30. The agent of claim 28, wherein X is $-OCH_2-$ or $-CH_2O-$.

31. The agent of claim 28, wherein Y is C_1 to C_4 alkyl, to which is attached at least one $-OSO_3R^4$ moiety.

(NE)

32. The agent of claim 28, wherein Y is a sulfonated polycarbinol chain of 1 to 6 sulfonated carbon atoms.

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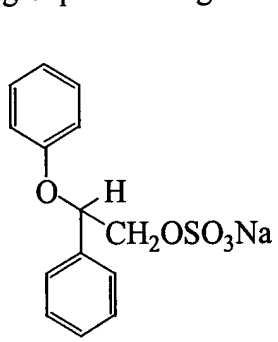
33. (Amended) The agent of claim 28, wherein at least two $-OSO_3R^4$ moieties are attached to Y.

(NE)

34. The agent of claim 28, wherein Y is ethyl-1,2-disulfate.

35. (Amended) The agent of claim 28, wherein the agent is selected from the group consisting of:



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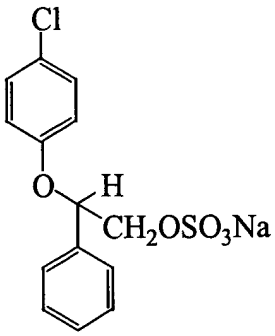

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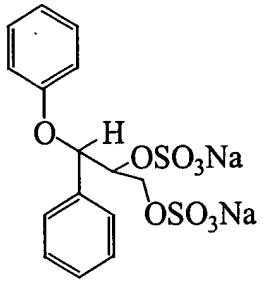

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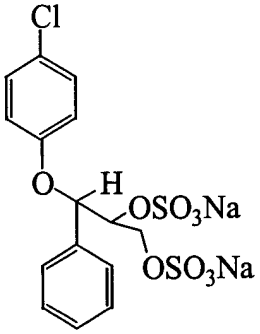

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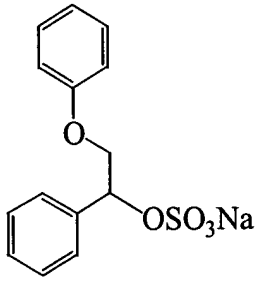

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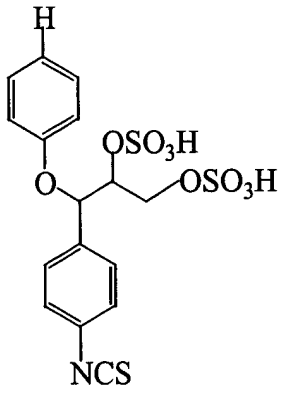

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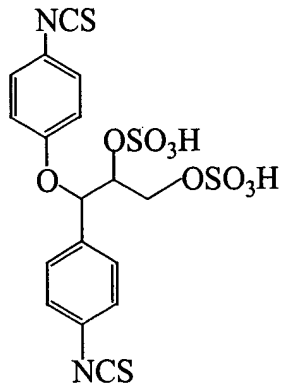
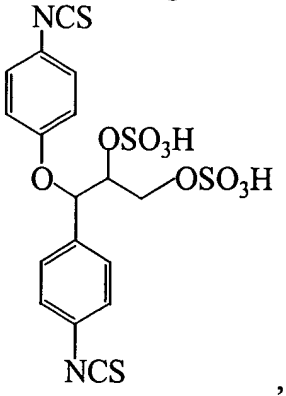


, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

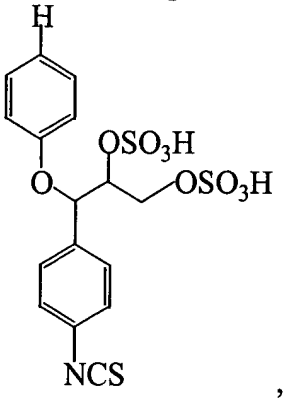
36. The agent of claim 35, wherein the agent is



, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

37. The agent of claim 35, wherein the agent is

(NE)



, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

38. A composition comprising an agent according to claim 28 and a pharmaceutically acceptable excipient.

39. A composition comprising an agent according to claim 28 and a proton pump inhibitor.

Please add new claims 41-42.

41 (New) The agent of claim 28, wherein from 2 to 6 $-OSO_3R^4$ moieties are attached to Y.

42. (New) The agent of claim 28, wherein Y is C_1-C_6 alkyl, C_2-C_6 alkenyl, or C_3-C_6 alkynyl.